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E.O. 12356: DECL: NOVEMBER 23, 1988

TAGS: ASEC, HOPS, PINS, PINT, PINR, SOPN, MILI, US, AF

SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT, NOV. 15 - 22, 1982

REF: KABUL 1868

1. (C.-ENTIRE TEXT.)

2. ALL OF THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MAY BE USED IN BRIEFING THE PRESS, PROTECTING SOURCES WHERE INDICATED.

3. SUMMARY: AUTHORITATIVE ACCOUNTS OF THE SALANG TUNNEL DISASTER AGREE THAT SOMETHING UNDER 1,000 PERSONS LOST THEIR LIVES FOLLOWING A ROAD ACCIDENT AND THE DENIAL OF EXIT TO THOSE INSIDE BY SOVIET SOLDIERS. THE ONLY QUESTION IS WHETHER ALL THE VICTIMS DIED OF ASPHYXIATION OR WHETHER SOME WERE SHOT.

4. ALTHOUGH KABUL HAS BEEN RELATIVELY CALM, THE AREA AROUND IT HAS NOT, AND ASSASSINATIONS IN THE CAPITAL HAVE CONTINUED DESPITE HEAVY SECURITY PRECAUTIONS. THE RESISTANCE SUCCEEDED EARLIER IN THE MONTH IN RUPTURING IN TWO PLACE THE PIPELINE WHICH BRINGS PETROLEUM FROM THE SOVIET UNION TO SOVIET BASES ON BOTH SIDES OF THE HINDU KUSH. THERE WAS ALSO HEAVY FIGHTING IN THE MOUTH OF THE LOGAR VALLEY CLOSE TO KABUL WHERE A CONTINGENT OF REGIME TROOPS WAS LANDED BY HELICOPTER, ROCKETED BY THE MUJAHIDEEN, BOMBED BY ITS OWN HELICOPTERS, AND FINALLY EVACUATED FROM THE AREA BY HELICOPTER. AT LEAST ONE HELICOPTER IS KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN SHOT DOWN DURING OR JUST AFTER THIS ENGAGEMENT. THE STANDOFF BETWEEN RESISTANCE AND REGIME FORCES SEEMS TO BE RETURNING TO THE SHOMALI AREA TO

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THE NORTH OF KABUL. ALTHOUGH SOME OF THE SCARS THE REGION BEARS ARE INDELIBLE, RESISTANCE ATTACKS ON MILITARY PATROLS AND CONVOYS. CONTINUE, AND MUJAHIDEEN MOVE FREELY WHEREVER THEY LIKE, NORMALLY WITHOUT BEING CHALLENGED BY REGIME UNITS GARRISONED IN THE AREA. INTERNECINE FIGHTING BETWEEN RESISTANCE GROUPS HAS ALSO BEGUN AGAIN IN ONE PERPETUALLY TROUBLED SHOMALI TOWN.

END SUMMARY.

5. NOTE ON THE SALANG: DURING THE PAST WEEK, WE HAVE HEARD A NUMBER OF ACCOUNTS ON THE SALANG TUNNEL DISASTER WHICH COME

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FROM AUTHORITATIVE SOURCES AND WHICH ARE IN AGREEMENT ON MOST POINTS. IT NOW APPEARS LIKELY: -- THAT THE TANKER CAUGHT FIRE;

-- THE SOVIET TROOPS STOPPED ALL MOVEMENT IN AND OUT OF THE TUNNEL, PROBABLY FOR A PROTRACTED PERIOD; -- THAT SOMETHING UNDER 1000 PERSONS, OF WHOM BETWEEN 200 AND 350 WERE SOVIETS, LOST THEIR LIVES: -- AND THAT SOME OF THE BODIES ARRIVING IN KABUL HAD BEEN STRIPPED OF VALUABLES.

6. THE MAJOR DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE ACCOUNTS IS AS TO WHETHER SOME OF THOSE WHO LOST THEIR LIVES WERE KILLED BY GUNFIRE RATHER THAN BY ASPHYXIATION. ON NOVEMBER 18, THE DRA REGIME MEDIA ISSUED THEIR FIRST STATEMENT ON THE INCIDENT, A TERSE BULLETIN SAYING THAT THERE HAD BEEN LOSS OF LIFE IN A ROAD ACCIDENT IN THE SALANG AND DENYING ALLEGED WESTERN NEWS REPORTS THAT SOME OF THE VICTIMS HAD BEEN SHOT. HOWEVER, AN AFGHAN WHO CLAIMS TO HAVE SEEN AT LEAST ONE BULLET-RIDDLED BODY IN KABUL HOSPITAL CONFIRMS THE ACCOUNT OF A WELL PLACED DIPLOMATIC SOURCE (PLEASE PROTECT BOTH) THAT THERE WAS SHOOTING DURING THE INCIDENT.

7. SOVIET PETROLEUM PIPELINE RUPTURED: IN THE FIRST PART OF NOVEMBER, THE RESISTANCE SABOTAGED IN TWO PLACES THE PIPELINE WHICH BRINGS KEROSENE, GASOLINE AND DIESEL FUEL FROM THE BORDER AT HAIRATAN TO THE SOVIET BASES AT DASHT-E-KELAGAI TO THE NORTH OF THE HINDU KUSH AND MORE RECENTLY TO THE BAGRAM AIR BASE IN THE SHOHALI REGION NORTH OF KABUL. ACCORDING TO AN AFGHAN SOURCE
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WHO TRAVELS FROM HAIRATAN TO KABUL REGULARLY, THE MUJAHIDEEN SUCCEEDED IN BLOWING UP THE PIPELINE NEAR THE TOWN OF JI

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SAHANGAN (AIBAK) MIDWAY BETWEEN POL-E-KHOMRI AND HAZAR-E-

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SHARIF ON NOVEMBER 4. SEVERAL OF THE SOVIET SOLDIERS SENT TO REPAIR THE DAMAGE WERE REPORTEDLY KILLED BY LAND MINES PLANTED BY THE RESISTANCE AROUND THE BREAK. SOME THREE DAYS LATER, A TRAVELLER TO CHARIKAR, THE CAPITAL OF PARWAN PROVINCE LOCATED SOME 75 KILOMETERS NORTH OF KABUL, SAW RESIDENTS OF THE TOWN FILLING CONTAINERS WITH KEROSENE WHICH WAS SPURTING FROM A MAJOR BREAK IN THE PIPE IN OR NEAR THE TOWN LIMITS. ACCORDING TO THE TRAVELLER, NO ONE, INCLUDING SEVERAL SOVIET SOLDIERS HEARDY, APPEARED TO BE OVERLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE BREAK, AND THE POPULATION WAS THUS DOING ALL IT COULD TO STORE FREE FUEL.

8. KABUL: FOLLOWING THE NOVEMBER 12 BOMBING OF FOUR RESTAURANTS IN KABUL'S WELL-TO-DO SHAR-E-NAU DISTRICT, THE CITY HAS BEEN RELATIVELY CALM WITH REGIME MILITARY FORCES REPORTEDLY IN THEIR HIGHEST FORMAL STATE OF ALERT. THERE HAVE BEEN FREQUENT HOUSE-TO-HOUSE SEARCHES THROUGHOUT THE CITY, AND IN A DEPARTURE FROM STANDARD PRACTICE, THE AREAS WHERE FOREIGNERS LIVE HAVE NOT BEEN SPARED. A UNITED NATIONS EMPLOYEE, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS ROUSED FROM BED AT SIX A.M. ON THE MORNING OF NOVEMBER 19 BY A SEARCH PARTY AND HAD GREAT DIFFICULTY IN PERSUADING THE GROUP'S COMMANDER THAT UNITED NATIONS PREMISES WERE OFF LIMITS. THE REGIME TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE LULL IN THE STORM TO STAGE A MARCH THROUGH THE CITY BY COMMUNIST PARTY FAITHFUL AND MEMBERS OF THE WORLD PEACE COUNCIL WHICH ENDED NOVEMBER 15. THE COUNCIL CLOSED ITS DELIBERATIONS A DAY AHEAD OF SCHEDULE, APPARENTLY BECAUSE A PLANNED TRIP TO JALALABAD HAD TO BE CANCELLED FOR SECURITY REASONS.

9. DESPITE THE HEIGHTENED SECURITY PRECAUTIONS, THE RESISTANCE SUCCEEDED IN LENGTHENING THE LIST OF ABDUCTED AND ASSASSINATED PARTY AND MILITARY PERSONNEL. ON NOVEMBER 9, AN ARMY OFFICER
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NAMED ALLAHUDDIN WAS TAKEN FROM HIS HOME BETWEEN THE SOVIET EMBASSY AND THE DARULANE PALACE IN THE SOUTH OF THE CITY, AT ROUGHLY THE SAME TIME, AN AIR FORCE OFFICER WAS ASSASSINATED IN THE VEITHER KHAIK KHANA SECTION OF TOWN AS HE WAS ON HIS WAY TO WORK, AND THE BODIES OF FIVE MEMBERS OF THE EIGHT INFANTRY DIVISION BASED AT KARGHA OUTSIDE THE CITY WERE FOUND IN THE CENTRAL SHOR BAZAAR ALUA IN MID-NOVEMBER. ON NOVEMBER 18, AN OFFICER WAS SHOT DEAD AT HIS HOME IN THE DARULANE DISTRICT, AND ANOTHER OFFICER MET A SIMILAR FATE IN BRO DAYLIGHT THE NEXT DAY NEAR A GAS STATION IN THE KARTE PARWAN NEIGHBORHOOD. FINALLY, ON NOVEMBER 13, THE RESISTANCE FIRED THREE ROCKETS AT THE MILITARY HIGH SCHOOL ON THE EDGE OF THE SOUTHWESTERN KOTE

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SANGI SECTION. THE FACILITY WAS UNSCAINED.

10. THE LOGAR VALLEY: ALTHOUGH THERE WERE FEW SOUNDS OF BATTLE FROM THE MOUTH OF THE LOGAR VALLEY TO THE SOUTH OF THE CITY DURING THE WEEK, A MILITARY OPERATION WHICH REGIME FORCES MOUNTED THERE IN MID-NOVEMBER WAS OBVIOUS FOR ALL TO SEE. BEGINNING ON NOVEMBER 17, HELICOPTERS WERE PRESENT IN UNUSUALLY LARGE NUMBERS OVER THE VILLAGE OF SHEWAKI ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CAPITAL. THIS ACTIVITY REACHED ITS HEIGHT ON NOVEMBER 19, BEFORE SUBSIDING TO NORMAL LEVELS.

11. AN AFGHAN SOURCE (PROTDFZ) DESCRIBED THE INCIDENT AS FOLLOWS. FROM 1000 TO 1100 A.M. ON NOVEMBER 17, SIX REGIME HELICOPTERS VISITED THE AREA BETWEEN SHEWAKI AND BAGRAMI AND DISEMBARKED AN UNSPECIFIED NUMBER OF TROOPS. THESE MEN REMAINED WHERE THEY LANDED AND CAME UNDER ROCKET ATTACK FROM RESISTANCE FIGHTERS LOCATED IN THE MOUNTAINOUS CHAKRI AREA NEARBY. AT SOME POINT LATE ON NOVEMBER 18, REGIME HELICOPTERS RETURNED TO BOMBARD THE AREA BUT SUCCEEDED IN HITTING THEIR OWN TROOPS, CAUSING A LARGE BUT UNSPECIFIED NUMBER OF CASUALTIES. THE TROOPS WERE APPARENTLY SUPPOSED TO RETURN TO KABUL ON NOVEMBER 18. WHEN THEY DID NOT TURN

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UP, MORE HELICOPTERS WERE DISPATCHED TO THE AREA ON

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NOVEMBER 19 AND SPENT THE DAY RECOVERING THOSE MEN STILL ALIVE ALONG WITH THE BODIES OF THEIR LESS FORTUNATE COMRADES.

12. SEVERAL SOURCES HAVE ALSO CONFIRMED THAT A DAMAGED HELICOPTER CRASHED IN THE DAGRAHI-KARTE NAW AREA AT THE MOUTH OF THE VALLEY ON NOVEMBER 20. ACCORDING TO AN EYE WITNESS, A SECOND HELICOPTER WHICH LANDED NEAR THE SITE OF THE CRASH TO RECOVER THE CREW CAME UNDER FIRE FROM MUJAHIDEEN NEARBY BUT MANAGED TO ACCOMPLISH ITS MISSION WITH THE AID OF OTHER HELICOPTERS CIRCLING OVERHEAD. PARTS OF THE DOWNED HELICOPTER WERE BROUGHT BACK TO KABUL BY TRUCK, AND THE CRASH SITE IS REPORTEDLY DYED BY THREE TANKS.

13. IT IS GENERALLY AGREED IN KABUL THAT FIGHTING IN THE LOGAR IS HEAVY. SPECIFIC REPORTS OF WHAT IS GOING ON IN AREAS MORE REMOTE THAN SHEWAKI AND BAGRAHI FIND THEIR WAY BACK TO THE CITY ONLY RARELY.

14. PAGHMAN: BY CONTRAST WITH THE LOGAR, THINGS HAVE BEEN RELATIVELY CALM IN PAGHMAN 15 KILOMETERS NORTHWEST OF KABUL DURING THE WEEK. THE ONLY INCIDENT TO COME TO OUR ATTENTION OCCURRED ON NOVEMBER 17 WHEN TWO OR THREE ARMORED VEHICLES WERE RELIABLY REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN DESTROYED NEAR KHOJA MOSAFER ON THE MAIN ROAD FROM KABUL TO THE TOWN. ALTHOUGH, IT IS NOT CLEAR WHETHER THE VEHICLES WERE SOVIET OR AFGHAN, WE HAVE RECEIVED SEPARATE REPORTING FROM TWO SOURCES THAT BETWEEN TWO AND FOUR SOVIETS DIED IN PAGHMAN DURING THE WEEK. WE SUSPECT THEY MAY HAVE BEEN KILLED IN THIS INCIDENT.

15. THE SHOMALI: THE SHOMALI: THE VERDANT SHOMALI REGION STRETCHING FROM THE NORTHERN EDGE OF KABUL CITY TO THE HUNDU KUSH MOUNTAINS AND THE ENTRANCE TO THE PANJSHER VALLEY, HAS BEEN
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SUBJECTED SINCE EARLY SUMMER TO REPEATED SOVIET AIR AND GROUND ATTACKS. SOVIET FORCES HAVE TRIED TO UNDERCUT POPULAR SUPPORT FOR LOCAL RESISTANCE GROUPS WHICH, IN THE NORTH OF THE SHOMALI, ARE ALLIED WITH HASUD'S JAHAT-E-ISLAMI RESISTANCE ORGANIZATION IN THE PANJSHER VALLEY. THE SOVIET AIM HAS APPARENTLY BEEN TO SECURE THE MAJOR HIGHWAY TO THE NORTH WHICH RUNS THROUGH THE SHOMALI THROUGH THE SALANG TUNNEL.

16. THE BOMBING OF VILLAGES NEAR THE HIGHWAY AND THE CREATION OF VIRTUAL FREE-FIRE ZONES HAS OBSTRUCTED THE HARVESTING OF THE SHOMALI'S RICH FIELDS AND DRIVEN THE MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION OF THE AREA TO KABUL. ACCORDING TO REPORTS BY TRAVELLERS, THE

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MARKETS IN VILLAGES AND TOWNS NEAR THE HIGHWAY ARE NOW OFTEN SHORT OF TEA, SUGAR AND FLOUR BECAUSE OF THE OBSTACLES POSED BY SOVIETS TO NORMAL PROVISIONING. ALSO ACCORDING TO SOURCE THE RAISIN TRADE (PROTECT), THE CROP FROM THE SHOMALI IS 50 PERCENT OFF ITS NORMAL LEVEL BECAUSE, AMONG OTHER THINGS, IT IS TOO DANGEROUS TO PICK IN ARBORS NEAR THE HIGHWAY. FINALLY, THE CHINESE IRRIGATION SYSTEM FROM GULBAHAR SOUTH CANNOT BE EFFECTIVELY USED SINCE PERSONS CANNOT APPROACH NEAR ENOUGH TO THE DIVERSION POINTS TO DIRECT AND DIVERT THE WATER.

17. THE SCARS LEFT BY THE SOVIETS' SUMMER BOMBARDMENT ARE INDELIBLE IN SOME AREAS. THE TRAVELLER (AGAIN PROTECT), WHO OBSERVED THE TAKING OF KEROSENE FROM THE RUPTURED PIPELINE IN CHARIKAR REPORTED THAT THAT TOWN HAS SUFFERED TERRIBLY DURING THE SUMMER'S BOMBARDMENTS AND THAT THE SITUATION THERE WAS VERY TENSE. MANY STRUCTURES HAD BEEN REDUCED TO RUBBLE, AND SOVIET AND AFGHAN SOLDIERS HAD TAKEN BEAMS AND OTHER CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS FROM THE DESTROYED BUILDINGS, APPARENTLY TO PREVENT THEIR BEING REBUILT. AFTER THREE P.M., THE TRAVELLER SAID, THE STREETS OF THE TOWN BECAME DESERTED BECAUSE THE TOWNSPEOPLE FEARED BEING ACCOSTED EITHER BY THE RESISTANCE OR BY SOVIET AND REGIME FORCES PATROLLING THERE.

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18. NEVERTHELESS, LIFE IN THE SHORALI GOES ON. THE CIVILIAN

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POPULATION IS RETURNING TO THE AREA, AND WITH THE NUMBER AND INTENSITY OF RAIDS AND BOMBARDMENTS REDUCED, THE OLD STANDOFF BETWEEN THE RESISTANCE AND THE REGIME IN THE REGION APPEARS TO BE REASSERTING ITSELF. IN THE AREA OF KARIZ-E-MIR, 15 KILOMETERS NORTH OF KABUL, THE REGIME GARRISON LOCATED AT THE FORMER KING'S GARDEN GENERALLY MANAGES TO COEXIST WITH THE RESISTANCE FORCES WHICH, IN THE ABSENCE OF SOVIET PATROLS, MOVE FREELY THROUGHOUT THE REGION.

19. SUCH ACCOMMODATIONS DO NOT ALWAYS HOLD. ON NOVEMBER 13, A MILITARY PARTY SENT FROM KABUL TO THE GARDEN TO CUT WOOD FOR THE DEFENSE MINISTRY TRIED TO MAKE PEACE WITH A GROUP OF MUJAHIDEEN WHO CAME TO WITNESS THE PROCEEDINGS. WHEN THE COMMANDER OF THE PARTY EXTENDED HIS HAND TO THE RESISTANCE LEADER, THE LATTER THREW HIM TO THE GROUND, AND SHOTS WERE FIRED CLOSE TO HIS BODY AS HE LAY BEFORE HIS ADVERSARIES. THE PARTY AND THE GARRISON IN THE GARDEN DID NOT CHALLENGE THE MUJAHIDEEN, AND THE WOOD-CUTTERS BEAT A RETREAT TO KABUL WITHOUT ENTERING THE GARDEN.

20. THERE ARE ALSO STILL OCCASIONAL OUTBREAKS OF FIGHTING, PARTICULARLY ALONG THE ROAD LEADING NORTH FROM KABUL. EARLY ON THE MORNING OF NOVEMBER 7, A COMBINED SOVIET/REGIME FORCE MOVING THROUGH THE TOWN OF SERAI-YE-KHOJA TEN KILOMETERS NORTH OF KABUL WAS ATTACKED BY THE RESISTANCE AND LOST SEVERAL ARMORED VEHICLES AND THEIR CREWS. SERAI-YE-KHOJA WAS HEAVILY BOMBARDED BY HELICOPTERS IN RETALIATION FOR THE ATTACK. ALSO, ON THE NIGHT OF NOVEMBER 18-19, A TRUCK DRIVER (PROTECT) COMING OUT FROM HAIRATAN REPORTED BEING STOPPED NEAR JABUL-ES-SERAJ 60 KILOMETERS FROM KABUL AND PREVENTED FROM GOING ON UNTIL MORNING. THE DRIVER LEARNED THAT THE RESISTANCE HAD ENGAGED A MILITARY CONVOY

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JUST SOUTH OF JABUL-ES-SERAJ AND HAD CAPTURED THREE TRUCKS FULL OF MUNITIONS. THESE WERE TAKEN EITHER INTO THE GHORBAND VALLEY TO THE WEST OF THE HIGHWAY OR TO THE KOKHISTAN AREA TO THE EAST.

21. FINALLY, THE INTERNECINE FIGHTING BETWEEN RESISTANCE GROUPS THAT HAS BEEN A PART OF LIFE IN THE SHOMALI GOES ON AS USUAL. THE LATEST INCIDENT OCCURRED AROUND NOVEMBER 10 IN THE TOWN OF ESTALEF, 40 KILOMETERS NORTH OF KABUL AND INVOLVED GROUPS LOYAL TO THE JAMIAT-E-ISLAMI, TO SEBGHATULLAH MOJADEDI, AND TO SAYYED AHMED GAILANI ON ONE SIDE AND MEMBERS OF GULBUDDIN HEKHATYAR'S HEZB-E-ISLAMI ON THE OTHER. THE JAMIAT COMMANDER IN THE ESTALEF REGION HAD SUCCEEDED IN ASSERTING HIS PRIMACY OVER

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GULBUDDIN'S MEN THERE DURING THE SUMMER, BUT HIS CONTROL OF THE SITUATION PROVED TEMPORARY. ACCORDING TO REPORTS REACHING KABUL, AS MANY AS FORTY RESISTANCE FIGHTERS MAY HAVE DIED IN THE LATEST FIGHTING WHICH IS APPARENTLY NOT OVER YET.

22. BAHIAN: A RECENT TRAVELLER FROM BAHIAN REPORTS THAT VIRTUALLY ALL OF THIS CENTRALLY LOCATED PROVINCE IS UNDER CONTROL OF THE MUJAHIDEEN. EVEN IN BAHIAN TOWN, WHERE THE RESISTANCE MAINTAINS A PRESENCE, THERE ARE NO SOVIETS, AND NONE IF FOUND ON THE ROAD BETWEEN CHARIKAR AND BAHIAN. IN CHARIKAR, THE SOVIET CHECKPOINT EXTRACTS REGULAR "TOLLS," SOMETIMES INCLUDING THE SHOES OF TRAVELLERS, AND FROM THERE ON THERE ARE NUMEROUS RESISTANCE CHECKPOINTS. THE MUJAHIDEEN TOO MAKE LEVIES ON TRAVELLERS, SOMETIMES CHARGING AS MUCH AS 400 AFGHANS (\$5.00) PER PERSON.
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